

REMARKS

I. Introduction

This Amendment is in response to the final Office Action, dated July 25, 2006. This Amendment cancels claim 2 and 9, amends claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, and 22, and adds new claims 24-25 to further describe the invention. Additionally, accompanying this Amendment is a Request for Continued Examination, Petition for a Two-Month Extension of Time, and a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement citing United States Patent No. 5,165,556 to Karhunen identified in a Communication from the Chinese Patent Office in a corresponding Chinese patent application on September 1, 2006. Consideration and a signed copy of Form PTO/SB/08A accompanying the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement are respectfully requested.

New claims 24-25 are fully supported by the original disclosure. Support for new claim 24 is provided in Figs. 7-8 and the accompanying discussion thereof in the last full paragraph beginning on page 5 and ending on page 6, line 4 of the specification. Similar support for new claim 25 is provided in Figs. 7-8 and in the original disclosure.

In the final Office Action, claims 14-16 were indicated as being allowed and claims 9-12 and 22 were objected to for being based upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the rejected base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the foregoing amendments, claim 8 was amended to include the limitations of claim 9, and claim 22 was rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of claim 8. Claims 8, 10-13, and 21-23 are now respectfully submitted as being in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 4, and 17 are amended to attend to the indefiniteness rejections under 35 USC § 102(b), second paragraph, in the final Office Action, and reconsideration of these rejections is respectfully requested.

II. Claim Rejections

Claims 1-4, 7, 17, 18, and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) for anticipation by United States Patent No. 5,102,291 to Hine. Claims 1, 3, and 5 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) for obviousness over United States Patent No. 6,986,636 to Konig et al. in view of United States Patent No. 6,692,219 to Coomer et al. Claims 1 and 6 stand rejected

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under 35 USC § 103(a) for obviousness over United States Patent No. 6,682,113 to Cox et al. in view of United States Patent No. 6,752,585 to Reimer et al. Claims 1, 3-6, 8, 17, 19-21, and 23 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) for obviousness over United States Patent No. 6,129,396 to Asada et al. in view of United States Patent No. 6,068,438 to Barry. Claim 13 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) for obviousness over Asada in view of Barry, and further in view of either United States Patent No. 4,350,254 to Noly or United States Patent No. 4,168,857 to Kloos. Reconsideration of all the foregoing rejections is respectfully requested.

III. Cited References

Hine is the first of four different primary references cited in the final Office Action in connection with independent claim 1. Hine discloses a device for transporting silicon wafers. As shown in Fig. 7, presenter structures (5, 8) extend upward from a mounting frame (1). Opposing presenters (5, 8) are adapted to engage the lateral sides of a wafer. As shown in Fig. 1, each presenter (5, 8) is provided with a vertically oriented roller (18, 19).

Konig and Cox are additional primary references cited in the final Office Action and disclose similar clamping devices for engaging a disk-shaped object. In Figs. 2 and 7 of Konig, an object holder (9) is shown. Object holder (9) comprises a plurality of clamping devices (47). Clamping devices (47) are roller-shaped for engaging the circumferential edge of the disk-shaped object.

Cox discloses a wafer clamping mechanism that includes a wafer carrying blade (204) that engages a wafer (202) at its peripheral edge. A clamping arm (302) is provided adjacent carrying blade (204) and includes a roller (210) for engaging a peripheral edge of the wafer (202).

Asada is the fourth primary reference cited in the final Office Action. Asada discloses a container spreader comprising beams (1A-1C) which are adapted to engage a container (C). An elevation guide (3) depends from spreader member (1C) and includes a guide frame (5) that engages the container (C).

Coomer, Reimer, Barry, Noly, and Kloos are cited in the final Office Action for certain alleged secondary teachings. Column 3, lines 27-32 of Coomer is cited in the final Office Action. This passage states that rotary latches, pivotal rollers, or non-contact tabs may be used in place of pivotal gripper hooks in the disclosed preferred embodiment. Reimer is cited for the

teaching of a guide rail (134) on which a guide (132) is provided which supports a substrate transfer mechanism (120). Barry is cited for disclosing an alignment column (74) with an engagement roller (110A). Kloos or Noly are cited for disclosing a spreader with a motor.

IV. Discussion of Rejections

It is noted that Applicants have made certain clarifying amendments to independent claim 1 to further distinguish over the cited references. One of these clarifying changes includes adding the subject matter of cancelled claim 2 to independent claim 1. Thus, clarified independent claim 1 claims means for fastening the roller which is capable of switching between a fastened state and a non-fastened state which permits rotation of the roller. An additional clarifying change relates to the recitation in claim 1 of a winding member supported by the vehicle and operatively connected with the holding means, and a motor supported by the vehicle and operatively connected with the winding member to rotate the winding member to move the holding means vertically. Support for this latter clarifying change is set forth on page 4, lines 22-27 of the specification.

In view of these clarifying changes, independent claim 1 is respectfully submitted as distinguishing over the cited references, particularly, Hine, which was cited as an anticipatory reference in connection with the subject matter of claims 1 and 2. It is respectfully submitted that these changes render the rejections over Hine moot. Further, none of the additional primary references cited in the final Office Action, namely Konig, Cox, or Asada were cited in connection with the subject matter of claims 1 and 2 and these rejections are now, therefore, moot in view of amended independent claim 1. Hine clearly fails to teach or suggest a winding member operatively connected to a holding means, and a motor operatively connected to the winding member to rotate the winding member to move the holding means vertically. No such structure is even remotely hinted at in Hine as a close inspection of Fig. 1 or Fig. 7 of Hine will confirm. Moreover, in the presenter structures (5, 8) disclosed by Hine, wheels (18, 19) are the portions or parts of presenter structures (5, 8) which actually engage and hold the selected wafer. Accordingly, wheels (18, 19) are not provided as a roller or rollers in a wobble prevention means as further set forth in independent claim 1. These structures are provided as part of the holding presenter structures (5, 8) which actually engage, hold and move the selected wafer. Wheels (18, 19) are not provided as a roller or rollers in a wobble prevention means as identified previously.

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Accordingly, the rejection of the subject matter now set forth in independent claim 1 over the disclosure of Hine is now moot and reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

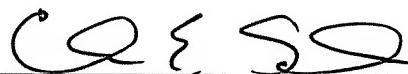
It is noted that the various secondary references cited in the final Office Action in connection with independent claim 1, namely, Coomer, Reimer, Barry, Noly, and Kloos do not overcome any of the foregoing deficiencies with Hine. The subject matter of independent claim 1, which now includes, in part, the subject matter of cancelled claim 2, is believed to fully distinguish over Hine. Claims 3-7 and 17-20 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 1 and distinguish over the cited references for the reason discussed hereinabove. Reconsideration of the rejections of claims 1, 3-7, and 17-20 is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding any of the foregoing or wish to discuss this application in further detail to advance prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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